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The following examples are typical of the ideas which the present-day Oklahoma Delaware express in their rationalization of the causes of various maladies and physical deformities. Rheumatism, which the Delaware call by a term meaning "old people's disease," is attributed to unclean habits of living during youth. Scrofula is described by the Delaware phrase meaning "matter around the neck." If a person indulges in profanity, he may develop this condition.

It is said that congenital malformation rarely occurs among the Indians. Such physical abnormalities are attributed to the power of malevolent spirits which afflicted the child because of his parents' failure to fulfill tribal obligations by keeping up certain ceremonies bequeathed to them. Such a physical handicap, however, did not keep an individual from leading a useful life, for he was otherwise blessed. The informant added, "Sometimes the weakest person is chosen by the Creator to be powerful in mind. He does that as a matter of pity."[1]

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Paralysis is said to be the result of an encounter with an apparition.[2] If a person sees a ghost-like form approaching, he should step aside to avoid being stricken with paralysis. According to Witapanóxwe, "an apparition in passing by is felt as a slight wind. Sometimes what appears to be a cloud is seen floating along the road and if allowed to touch a person, will cause a stroke." Occasionally a fire is observed to start at the bottom of a tree, blaze up to the top, and then disappear. The informant warned against attempting to strike at such a flame inasmuch as it would result in fatal sickness to the person or to a member of his family.

Witapanóxwe relates the following incident of a personal encounter with an apparition. "We were just young boys then, my brother and I, and we were riding home one afternoon just before sundown. As we rode along I noticed something in the middle of the road, and it seemed to be coming toward us. It had the appearance of a large animal but I could not see its form distinctly. Naturally, I was a little bewild-

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[1] Delaware mythology reiterates the theme of the weakling child vanquishing his powerful opponents through the weapon of shrewd wits over brute strength

[2] Zeisberger (no date, p. 131) says in regard to apparitions: "Wandering spirits and ghosts they claim sometimes throw something into a public path and whoever goes over it is bewitched and becomes lame or ill. They even pretend to know where such a thing happened, learning it from the doctors who are thought to be able to effect a cure."

nected within the womb. If one is hurt, the other will feel it even though they are separated by many miles. A child whose mother died during its birth, must not be allowed to cry. Someone must try to comfort it so that the spirit of the dead mother may not injure, or even kill the foster parent. 845

Birthmarks are an indication that both parents have experienced difficulties with other people. During his youth one man conversed with a dead person in a vision. The skeleton said to him, "You should know me by the mark on your children. You will know more when they are born." All of his children (boys) had a characteristic pecularity about the eyes, lacking control of the lids so that during the day they blinked constantly. Sometimes a birthmark in the shape of a leaf or berry appears on the child. This is attributed to a dream by the mother. The fruit means good luck and long life. A mark formed like a reptile is considered an evil omen. 845 826 787

While nursing the child, the mother must refrain from intercourse with any man other than her husband so that the infant may not have diarrhea. 853 837

A few notes were obtained on the treatment of the hair and teeth of children. 854

When a child's hair is cut, it is left in some out-of-the-way place.[20] It was believed that if the birds used it in building their nests, the child would suffer from headaches. If the remains were burnt, it would cause the hair to become brittle.[21]

During the teething period, a little bag containing finely crushed charcoal is hung about the child's neck. The latter chews upon it to ease his aching gums. A loose milk tooth is pulled out by means of a string, its removal allowing the permanent tooth to grow in straight. The extracted tooth is taken outdoors by the child and thrown in the direction of the east, with the words "My tooth I place down here. I know when you return I will feed you white beans."

A child's nails are trimmed with a knife or scissors. Care is taken not to lose any of the nail trimmings, which are carried into the woods and left upon a stump. At the same time the following words are addressed to the Owl: "Grandpa, I now give you these, your grandchild's nails, to make frames for your eyes."

[20] This and the following paragraph were recorded by Eugene Golomshtok, University of Pennsylvania, 1930.

[21] In adult life gray hair, an indication of longevity, is not pulled out. Its removal would be displeasing to the Creator as a lack of respect for the aged. 888 302

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This motive would be insufficient, even a sacrilege. The spiritual preparation of its participants was made a matter of prime importance and the purity of those concerned in it was to be insisted upon. Joe Washington has since felt that these serious injunctions were of so drastic a character that until the present time they could not be complied with. It seems, therefore, that there is little prospect for anything more than a dictated version to be obtained, which will have to await necessary support for its accomplishment.

Upon the occasion of my expedition to the Delawares in Oklahoma some time was spent in interviews with Tom Half Moon [2] who had had experience as an attendant, or *a'ckas*, of the Big House Ceremony as performed in recent years by his group, the Turkey group. The notes offered are, therefore, advantageous in respect to the details furnished by one who had the teachings directly from those who were responsible for its proper conduct. These notes should accordingly serve as a supplement to that section of the ceremony published in the Big House Ceremony volume dealing with the duties of the attendants. They are in effect as follows:

The attendants who sweep the White Path, or the path around which the dancers proceed when performing in the Big House after each dance, do so with turkey wings, using only the left hand in holding the fans, since the left hand is the holy hand, the right the unholy. The male attendants start sweeping at opposite ends from the women. When they have swept the dancing path twelve times they have cleared away the obstacles of an unfavorable spiritual nature lying between the worshippers and the Great Spirit. As was noted in the published account, the attendants each receive a yard of wampum at the end of the ceremony. He also noted that those who attended the ceremony received two wampum beads each to be kept by them as tokens of good fortune until the next performance. These beads were, he added, held in the mouth as sacred objects when the members went outside

[2] His Delaware title-name is *Axkwe'lpa3gwo'xwv*, "Overturns Mountains when Walking," a member of the Turkey group.

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764 of the person departed, if he or she made any statement as to what way he wanted the burial conducted.

[525] "All who wish to may come and sit up with the corpse. The men pall-bearers sit up and others who wish to play a hand game,[44] using usually a coffee bean or buckeye bean or a bullet for ball hiding—first under a glove or moccasin—and the other persons guess which moccasin he hides 764 the bean or bullet under. This is kept up until daybreak. At night be- 775 fore the "wake," the men pall-bearers discharge three (another says two) musket shots toward the sunset, then everyone must rise and give attention. The shots symbolise the departure of the soul of the deceased. Everyone must be awakened, especially the children, so that they may not become frightened. The widowed person or the bereaved parents stay awake all night. And just before sunrise another volley of two or three shots is fired which symbolizes lifting the soul upward. The relatives of the deceased stand in front of the shooters. With the echo of the discharge the soul departs.

764 "Now an elderly person, who has been chosen to officiate at the ceremony, must offer thanks to the Great Spirit at breakfast time and [761] perform the ceremony before the body leaves the house. During the funeral procession no one must look back,—if they do it indicates another of the immediate members of the family will follow soon. The speaker must be given one 'Indian yard of wampum beads' for his services, which do not end until after the feast on the eleventh day noon hour.

"One of the pall-bearers must go to the grave each day and build a little fire at the head of the grave for four consecutive evenings and the people must leave the house in charge of someone, for it must not be left alone for twelve days, and a light must be kept burning at the main entrance of the house for four nights after the death of a person.

768 "And note, the widowed person must also be painted when the face 764 of the 'departed' body has been painted. Four days after, 'divorcement' proceeding takes place in the form of a ceremony. That is, they must burn cedar in the house to 'fumigate' and the cedar water is used to wash the widow's or widower's head. If a woman, she is told that she is now no longer obligated to her deceased husband's family. She is furnished with new clothes throughout. With this ceremony she is 'divorced,' but the relationship terminology remains the same to the family she formerly was married into.

775 "Now the burial hole is prepared on the day following the sitting up ● 826 with the body at night—it is not considered a grave until the body is in 772 it,—and even now, in the modern times, we do not believe in taking the body to be embalmed, as we believe the life blood is the spirit that remains on earth until the deceased is admitted to the abode of the Great Spirit, which is the twelfth level of the Heaven.

[44] This is the common moccasin game of North America. For description see S. Culin, "Games of the North American Indians," 24th Annual Report, Bureau American Ethnology 1906, and page 90 of this study.